
Primary School Libraries in the Southern Region: a Case Study of Collaboration Towards Library Development

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Abstract

Botswana has a long term vision for the nation up to 2016 when Botswana shall have been independent for 50 years to be a prospective, productive and innovative society. This vision has 7 pillars, amongst which, is the achievement of an educated and informed nation. This clearly calls for Botswana to work together and collaborate to achieve ideals of the vision. The primary school libraries project of the Southern Region of Botswana is one example of how various organizations and individuals collaborated. The collaboration is discussed in this paper, with a focus on the benefits of the collaboration as well as some of the challenges faced and how these may be addressed. The paper discussed the observed impact of the project and future plans. Recommendations are made for other jurisdictions that may wish to embark on similar projects based on lessons learnt during the collaboration effect.

Introduction

The establishment of primary school libraries in the Southern Education Region of Botswana is a response to the pillar of an educated, informed nation of Vision 2016. School libraries are an important and essential component of any education system. At the primary school level, the library is indispensable in inculcating the love of reading and recognition that it is through reading that young children can begin to improve their language skills, as well as learn about many other things (expose their minds to new experiences, and cultures). Although the Revised National Policy on Education of 1994 has a recommendation that all schools must have libraries to aid the learning process, many primary schools do not in fact have any libraries to speak of. However, there are people that are concerned about the lack of libraries and it is through the collaboration of these people that the impetus to establish libraries in the Southern region (an administrative region for the management of education at local levels) was given a

boost that resulted in the spread of the primary school movement not only in the Southern region but in others as well. A trust, Children's Information Trust (CIT) was formed in 2002 with the aim of encouraging and advocating for the development of libraries in primary schools as one way of not only aiding the education process but of ensuring that indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage is passed down to Batswana children. In the Southern region, CIT found that the schools and Parent-Teacher Associations were keen and working in partnership to develop school libraries. At the same time, a US based organization named the Library Project came to learn of the Southern Region efforts and committed itself to donating books suitable for primary school children sourced through the efforts of book drive volunteers. To date, a significant number of libraries have been set up in primary schools in the region.

This paper discusses the collaborative efforts of the various groups and organizations that led to this development of primary school libraries. It also explores what the successes and failures of the collaboration were and how the collaboration itself evolved to overcome the failures to be where it is at now. A snap shot of how these libraries function and their impact is provided. The aim of the paper is to show how collaboration can feed on the synergies of like-minded groups to achieve the goals and objectives of the various groups.

Background

Botswana lies in Southern Africa and is bordered in the South and South East by South Africa, In the North by Zambia, in the West by Namibia, and in the East and North East by Zimbabwe. It is a landlocked country of 600,370 square kilometers. The country is largely dessert in the West (Kgalagadi) and wetlands (Okavango Delta and Chobe). Its economic mainstay are minerals, and in particular diamonds, coal, copper nickel and gold. As one of the largest diamond producers in the world, diamonds make up to one-third of the country's GDP or about 70% of export earnings. The country is also renowned for its cattle farming and has been one of the largest exporters of beef to the European Union. The tourism sector together with cattle farming, arable farming and the financial services make up the rest of GDP and earnings. Although at independence Botswana was a poor country, the discovery of diamonds soon changed that scenario. With diamond revenue the government has built impressive road and communication infrastructure and developed the education sector.

Botswana Education System

The Botswana education system is comprised of basic primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education. All together there are 751 primary schools, 207 junior secondary schools, 32 senior secondary schools, 1 national university, another one being built, 5 colleges of education, 8 colleges of nurses, 41 vocational colleges, 8 Technical colleges, 9 private colleges and 1 private university. The education system is such that Batswana children are guaranteed 10 years basic education starting from primary school up to secondary school. For many years this education was free for all children but now the government has re-introduced

nominal school fees for children whose parents can afford to pay. Tertiary education is largely sponsored by government although there have been talk of introducing some cost sharing measures. Primary schools in Botswana are however the most ill resourced in terms of facilities such as libraries and teachers who are lowly paid. The guiding policy document on education in Botswana is the Revised National Policy on Education paper of 1984 together with the pillar of an educated and informed nation as espoused in the country's Vision 2016 blueprint.

According to Baffour-Awuah (2002), developments in school libraries and librarianship have been influenced by 2 main policies. The first was the Education for Kagisano (Ministry of Education, 1977) which recommended that school librarianship courses be introduced at the University of Botswana, and that teachers be trained to become teacher-librarians. The second policy, the Revised National Policy on Education recommended that school libraries be established in all schools in Botswana (primary and secondary) to facilitate learning and literacy, however, by 2003, this ideal had not been achieved. Although primary schools had no libraries, the Ministry of Education spent a great deal of money to supply schools with supplementary readers for extra-curricular reading (Baffour-Awuah, 2002). Primary schools were also served by the public library system which included public libraries around the country, book box services, mobile libraries and village reading rooms (Baffour-Awuah, 2002). Actual libraries came into being through an evolving collaboration between parents and primary school teachers, organizations such as Children's Information Trust (CIT), Vision 2016 Council, Unicef, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, and finally the African Library Project (ALP) of the USA.

Collaboration

It is increasingly recognized that isolation and the silo approach to solving problems or providing social services is giving way to a more collaborative, connected, and integrated approach. The concept of collaboration dates back many years and spans many disciplines and sectors from education to health to research in higher education, etc. Multi-sectorial approaches to tackling social problems have become the norm, and facilitation of this is offered by information and communication technologies that have created an interconnected world on so many levels. Indeed, the library and information profession has long since recognized the importance of collaboration in the delivery of services. Library cooperation is something that has been practiced for many years, the building of consortia has also been in practice now for decades; more recently, academic librarians have recognized the need for collaboration with faculty to ensure that students in universities and colleges acquire information literacy skills. In lower levels of education, such as primary and secondary, there are different types of collaboration, such as that between parents and teachers, and between librarians and teachers to ensure the integration of libraries into the curriculum so that pupils/students develop information literacy skills. In health, collaboration may involve the different health professionals to provide holistic care; in areas such as HIV and AIDS collaboration may be between different sectors to

ensure that the problem is tackled from different perspectives, such as the social, clinical and economic, to cite a few.

Collaboration is generally about pooling together of different resources, reflected as different strengths to achieve some goals. Some programs and projects require concerted effort from different stakeholders who bring different skills and resources to the task at hand. Thus, collaboration happens when two or more entities decide to work towards a common goal together. It is about leveraging the synergies of the entities towards an agreed upon cause. Carnwell and Carson (n.d.) distinguish between partnership and collaboration as what something is (partnership) and what one does (collaboration). Clearly therefore, there has to be some partnership in order for there to be collaboration. That partnership may be formalized through an agreement or can be informal arising from a recognition that in order to achieve a goal or set of goals entities have to group themselves to work together (collaborate). Collaboration presupposes that the entities have expertise, experience and knowledge that they bring to the table; that they all have an interest in reaching a common goal. The idea behind collaboration is to bring together the expertise, knowledge and experience in such a way that goals are achieved. It is about the cross pollination of ideas, the pooling of resources, the sharing of ideas, knowledge and efforts towards a goal. Thus the bedrock of collaboration is communication, coordination and cooperation amongst entities. Montiel-Overall (2005) talks of four concepts that are associated with collaboration – these are networking, coordination, cooperation, and partnerships. According to the author networking is an essential building block for collaboration. It is about making informal relationships that lead to an exploration of mutually shared vision or objectives. Coordination is about bringing people together to work towards a goal in a way that makes use of the different expertise, knowledge and experience and avoids duplication of effort, roles and responsibilities. Cooperation is about formal or informal relationships towards achievement of goals, i.e. working together in a way that compliments what each is doing so as to achieve the goals. Partnership usually denotes a formalized agreement towards working together to achieve a goal. In this agreement, rules of engagement and expectations are clearly stipulated. One can think of these concepts as steps towards collaboration, where it starts with networking, to coordination, cooperation and finally partnership. Hudson et al. (1998) view collaboration as a continuum from isolation, through encounter, communication and collaboration, to integration (Carnwell & Carson (n.d.)). This continuum provides a conceptual framework for discussing the evolution of the collaboration that led to the development of primary school libraries in the Southern region in Botswana. Hudson et al. (1998) describe the characteristics of each component in the continuum. Isolation is characterized by entities working in isolation of each other with no communication between them. Entities, organizations or groups may or may not be aware of each other's existence. Encounter is where some contact may be established through networking or where entities are made aware of the existence of each other and the fact that they may be working towards a common goal. Communication occurs when entities encounter each other and begin to realize that they have something in common. There may be frequent interaction and sharing of ideas that may lead ultimately to agreements to

work together in one form or the other. Collaboration is established when agreements are reached to work together in a structured way with clearly articulated roles and responsibilities towards an agreed common goal or goals. Integration is when the collaboration has been entrenched to the extent that it becomes unthinkable not to have the entities working together as one unit almost.

Towards School Libraries in the Southern Region: a Collaborative Journey

In this section, we describe the journey in collaboration taken by various partners and the Southern Region to the point where primary school libraries became a reality. We trace that journey using the continuum outlined by Hudson et al (n.d.), beginning with isolation, through encounter, communication, collaboration, and integration.

Isolation

In this sub section, we discuss the main organizations concerned with the establishment of libraries at primary school level prior to their encounter with each other.

Vision 2016 Council – the Council is the facilitative arm of Botswana’s Vision 2016, a blue print that was developed in 1997 to provide a pathway to developing the nation according to the aspirations of Botswana by 2016. The Council is tasked with facilitating an environment that would enable Botswana to contribute towards achievement of the various pillars of the nation’s Vision 2016. The vision of Botswana has 7 main pillars, and of particular interest here is that of ensuring that Botswana are an educated and informed nation by 2016. As such, the Council through its secretariat, was on the look-out for organizations and individuals who expressed an interest in working towards the vision pillars.

Maun Region activities – At the time of encounter with the other potential partners, the Maun Education Centre through its in-service offices had started encouraging reading amongst primary school children working through their Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). The project in Maun was aimed at promoting a culture of reading, developing partnership with PTA and other bodies to work towards building “An Educated, Informed Nation”. The basis for this was to start with little children who would be helped learn to read and encouraged to like reading. Reading materials were predominantly received as book donations from an American organization, Books for Africa, facilitated through the Botswana Book Project run by an expatriate located in Maun. The project was aimed at establishing and developing primary school libraries. The books available by Books Botswana were distributed to various schools by the library committee at the education center. The success of this project was that ordinary parents were participating in setting up library corners and libraries in schools.

Southern Region – the staff at the Southern region education centre were interested in mobilizing their Parent-Teacher Association to follow the example of Maun and develop school libraries. For both Maun and the Southern Region, the aim was to use the establishment of libraries in primary schools as a way of improving reading, literacy and increasing the chances of academic success for the pupils – and in that way help achieve the objective of making Botswana an educated and informed nation by 2016.

Children’s Information Trust (CIT)

The trust was formed in 2003 by a group of information professionals in response to the Vision 2016 pillar of an educated and informed nation, as well as to the recommendations made in the revised national education policy of 1994. The need arose out of a realization that there was a dearth of information targeted specifically at young children, especially in the area of HIV and AIDs. Another was the realization that in order to encourage the development of an information society there was need to create a nation that is well informed and adept at collecting, analyzing and synthesizing information, and that this could be done by targeting the youth, who will be tomorrow’s leaders. The information professionals felt that they had not played an adequate role in exploiting their expertise in finding, facilitating and transmitting information to equip young people to use information effectively. They felt that there was a need to go back to basics and work with parents, teachers and other significant people in young people’s lives to inculcate this culture of informing themselves on every imaginable issue. The major objective of the trust was to work with stakeholders to facilitate the development of literacy, and a culture of reading for primary school children. The activities of CIT were premised on the realisation that in Africa, children between ages of 0-15 are left out when information services are designed or provided, and the need to focus on children’s information literacy needs, as well as recognition that young people are the engine of growth. Another consideration was that the culture and indigenous knowledge of Botswana was under threat. CIT therefore proposed to build on the traditional oral communication structures due to modernization and development. Thus dialogue between children and elders would be encouraged by tapping on the vibrant parent-teacher associations in primary schools.

Encounter

In an effort to establish networks with organizations that shared similar values with CIT, the organization approached the Vision 2016 Council on ways that they could be assisted to achieve their aims and objectives. Knowing about the activities of the Maun Education Centre in developing primary school libraries, the Vision Council convened a meeting at which potential stakeholders were invited. These included CIT, Representatives of Maun and Southern Region Education Centers, the Botswana National Library Services (BNLS), Botswana Library Association (BLA), and the Department of Primary Education of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. The aim of the meeting was to brainstorm on how to develop a reading culture and information literacy of children. As an exploratory meeting, it became apparent that

many efforts were being expended by different sectors towards the establishment of primary school libraries, and that there was need for coordination of efforts. It was agreed that there was a need for an awareness raising workshop that would serve to bring together all entities and organizations that had a stake in this endeavor. It was clarified at this meeting that the role of CIT was not to set the ball rolling, but to be involved and participate in already initiated activities and to mobilise librarians to take a keen interest in integrating oral tradition with the documented knowledge. To proceed, there was need to plan for awareness raising to encourage cross-sectional involvement. It was agreed that the objective of the awareness raising seminar would be to take an audit of activities around the country, and to project the Maun model as an example. It was also noted that UNICEF Botswana was in the process of setting up resource centers in various parts of Botswana aimed at providing HIV/AIDS information to primary school children. The meeting agreed that the UNICEF project tied in very nicely with the envisaged proposals and that the involvement of UNICEF should also be sought.

The CIT group also recognized the need to reach out to other stakeholders such as government ministries that had a stake in advancing the interest of children and youth, as well as in education. Other stakeholders included private organizations that could through their social responsibility programs, assist in resourcing the Trust. To this end therefore, a number of meetings were held with representatives of the Ministry of Education as the ministry responsible for education in Botswana; Ministry of Local Government and Lands as the ministry responsible for running primary schools; the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs as the ministry responsible for youth matters as well as the national library services; First National Bank of Botswana because of its vibrant social responsibility arm.

Communication

In order to be able to mobilize various stakeholders towards the aim of ensuring that children were provided with appropriate information on issues affecting them, and in particular on HIV and AIDS; that they developed a reading culture and were encouraged to do this through the participation of elders who would help impart cultural information in their library spaces; CIT approached a number of organizations, amongst which was UNICEF. UNICEF was seen to be the right partner since they too were involved in a project to provide HIV and AIDS information to young people. Having agreed that their aims were in effect converging, UNICEF and Vision Council agreed to support a nation-wide awareness raising workshop that would see representatives of educational regions invited to attend, as well as parent-teacher associations, school heads, teacher librarians, and other governmental stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. The workshop would serve to communicate the CIT vision and use the Maun libraries project as an example of what could be put in place to ensure that children were provided with appropriate information and knowledge, as well as helping them develop a reading culture.

Following the awareness raising meeting, CIT proceeded to engage the top echelons of the Ministries of Education, Labor and Home Affairs and Ministry of Local Government and Lands. These engagements resulted in the identification of appropriate officers within these ministries that could represent the Ministries in all CIT meetings and endeavors. Through these meetings the support of the Botswana National Library Services, Botswana National Youth Council, Department of Teacher Training and Department was secured. The Ministry of Education went further and agreed that it would convene a regrouping meeting of all Ministry of Education representatives that had attended the awareness workshop in a bid to try and draw up firm plans going forward.

Following a series of meetings by the CIT group, a decision was taken that the Southern region and Maun education centres would be taken to be CIT pilot sites where libraries would be set up through the parent teacher associations, with the support of CIT as well as other stakeholders including UNICEF. CIT would also submit a number of proposals to a variety of organizations to try and mobilize resources to establish libraries and provide computers to primary schools. These organizations included NEPAD, Rotary Club, Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology, and the University of Botswana. In addition, a number of proposals were submitted to newspaper publishers in order to publish the stories that the children would write as a result of their interactions with the elders in their libraries.

Collaboration

The fact that CIT did not have resources of its own and therefore relied on other organizations to support its endeavors meant that in the main, they were unable to live up to the expectations that they had engendered in their partners, namely the Southern and Maun education regions. CIT had simply promised so much when it did not necessarily have the means to provide what it had promised. The thinking behind the CIT concept was that through proposal and grant writing, they would be able to obtain the resources required to ensure that they provided equipment such as computers to primary schools in the pilot sites. Indeed the University of Botswana and MCST had promised to allocate used computers to CIT for this purpose, and arrangements had been made to deliver these computers when things went rather awry. As all this was unfolding, the two education regions were nevertheless making progress in establishing libraries in partnership with parents in the community.

It was around this time that the African Library Project got in contact with the CIT about the possibility of developing a proposal to supply children's books to primary schools through book drives carried out in the USA. The founder of the project, Ms Chris Bradshaw was to visit Botswana for this purpose. The CIT quickly contacted the In-Service Officer in the Southern Region and the Principal Education Officer in the Primary School Department to discuss this proposal and prepare for the arrival of Ms Bradshaw. When Ms Bradshaw arrived, discussions were held in the Ministry of Education, with CIT members, the Southern Education Region and she was received at the education centre and shown the progress that the schools had

made in establishing libraries and convinced that the donated books would make a world of difference in the lives of the pupils. Thus was born a collaboration that has seen significant number of school libraries established and hundreds of books donated. Today the collaboration is very strong between the Ministry of Education (as the parent ministry of the Southern region) and the African Library Project and has developed tremendously.

A critical component of the primary school library project in the Southern region is the parent teacher relationship that has been nurtured. Getting parents to participate in the education of their children is a goal that education administrators and teachers strive for. Education of children is a partnership between parents and teachers and can only thrive when there is a healthy relationship with clear roles, rights and responsibilities. Through activities such as the Library Project, it is a moment of opportunity for parents to feel at home and get involvement in schools. The upcoming years represent what researcher John Kingdon calls “a policy window” – a moment in time when three factors converge: “A problem is recognized, a solution is available, and the political climate is right for change.” This requires moving beyond business as usual. Historically, investments in parental involvement have been limited and inconsistent, in the education systems and schools themselves due to shifting political ideologies, issues of control and accountability.

Integration

The arrival of ALP on the scene gave the Southern region library project a big boost and brought it its wake more concrete collaboration on the part of government. The Ministry of Local Government weighed in as the ministry that provides the buildings for libraries, security, and transport to deliver the books to the schools. The Ministry of Education played its role by engaging with the Department of Customs in clearing of books through customs, facilitating professional training on all matters related to library operations. The African Library Project (ALP) organized books and money for shipment of containers to Botswana. The School parent teacher organizations formed a critical link in the development of these libraries – parents raise funds for school Library activities and volunteer to operate libraries. The Botswana National Library Services role is to advise on the upkeep of libraries and operational services. Thus, a whole network of collaborative partners has been marshaled and led to the integration of primary school libraries in the plans and activities of the stakeholders.

The Southern Region Primary School Library Project is mainly run by PTAs in their respective schools with the teachers and officers in the background. There is an elected Umbrella PTA committee formed by PTA chair persons of different schools, Teacher Librarians, School Heads, BNLS representative and Education Officers, Local Government Education Sector oversee the running of Libraries in all schools affected. The roles and responsibilities are as follows:

Without donations of books and computers, the project could not build libraries in schools. Without strong partnership in decision-making, the project could not develop any further. The project was fortunate to secure a donation of books from the African Library Project, an organization based in San Francisco, California U.S. The organization donates at least 1000 books per school. The San Francisco community does book drives and collect monies for the shipment of the books in big containers to Botswana. Every year in July, the project receives a container with books that could equip about 55 libraries.

Successes and Challenges

Clearly the collaboration as discussed in this paper has been successful, especially with regard to the development of primary school libraries in the Southern region. The momentum was built and is still holding its own. The network that was built as a result of the interaction between the entities meant that when an opportunity brought about by the African Library Project presented itself, there was a sense of to whom and where they should be directed. There were successes also in the sense that awareness was built country-wide of the need to ensure that there were libraries in primary schools. There is a lot of interest in establishing libraries in primary schools and in ensuring that there is good cooperation between parents and teachers – Maun and the Southern regions are regions that are continually benchmarked against. Indications also are that the academic performance of students in schools that have developed libraries have improved. The project has also engendered a healthy competition amongst schools to see which school will have the best run and used library. Many schools have embraced the idea of having members of the community as participants in the projects and as such there is story telling activities in the library – ensuring that Botswana culture gets passed on from generation to generation. The children at schools where libraries have been established have shown an increased perception of the importance of reading. This has also prompted parental involvement in schools. Parents show volunteerism by coming to assist in the library operations on an almost daily basis. This increases their interest in the rest of their children’s education. The parents have even started a Reading Club where they can also improve their own reading. For the last few years, the Primary School Leaving Examination results of the affected schools are observed to be getting better, thus suggesting improved learning achievement by the pupils. Establishing libraries in primary Schools in the Southern Region has provided the students with a foundation for learning to read. Without libraries, the students would not have an interest in interacting with the world of words around them, thus limiting their ability to make informed decisions. With the resources libraries made accessible to them, their world with words grows in depth and width and as they get more enlightened their capacity to make better choices in life is also stimulated. By having parents involved, the generation gap has been bridged and communication between teachers, parents and school children facilitated, this has been vital for addressing the emerging challenges amongst our communities in Botswana, HIV and environmental degradation being among them.

The challenges on the other hand, included the fact that CIT was never able to mobilize the resources required for it to play the leading role it had envisaged in this endeavor. However, they were nevertheless able to facilitate the connection between ALP and the Southern region library project. The envisaged scale of operation that CIT and its partners had in mind did not take off, and to date the Southern region seems to be the one that is succeeding where others may not be. The idea of providing not only books to schools but also computers never materialized because CIT did not have the means to do this, however other projects have stepped in and are providing computers. There are a number of challenges in the implementation of this project. The lack of connectivity to facilitate communication via e-mail in most of the schools in the Southern region is a challenge because of the expectation by the US based organization providing books and the US schools that organize book drives and send books. The modus operandi of this collaboration is that US primary schools twin with the Botswana schools and therefore when they receive books it is expected that the students in Botswana will communicate and give feedback to schools in the US via e-mail. Because of connectivity problems, this is not always the case and creates an impression that the books are not appreciated. Further, this impedes the cultural exchange that would be possible if students at both sites could communicate. Another challenge is the attitudes of some teachers who view library duties and taking students to the library as an additional burden and fail to see how this integrates with the process of learning and teaching. As such, there are teachers who will not take students to the library even though this is time tabled, and fail to find a way of integrating use of the library with their teaching methods. Clearly there is need for training such teachers so that they can appreciate the role of libraries in learning. Since the project functions through PTAs, and in particular, the Umbrella PTA which has representation from all PTAs in the Southern region, there is often need for them to travel to the different schools to assist in setting up and managing libraries. The challenge then becomes the availability of transport as there aren't enough vehicles in the region to enable the free movement as and when required. The solution has been to decentralize umbrella PTAs to different sub regions but the transport problem still persists. The lack of reliable transportation also affects the monitoring of the project by the education officers as it means they are not able to follow their planned visits to sites. The lack of professional librarians to manage the libraries is also a major challenge and results in insufficient support on the ground to ensure management and well used libraries. Although generally there is a lot of enthusiasm amongst schools for libraries, there are exceptions where the interest levels are low. The result is that even though these schools may receive book donations, they are never unpacked and can be found in their original boxes. This calls for the Ministry of Education to put in place a policy on school libraries in primary schools, and resources the schools adequately so that there is leadership and partnership to support the expansion of library establishment in primary schools.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations towards addressing the challenges:

- The Ministry of Education needs to take complete ownership of the project by putting in place a policy on primary school libraries and ensuring that the schools are well resourced in terms of manpower, equipment, transport, connectivity and all that is required to ensure fully functional libraries.
- There is need to have professional librarians instead of relying completely on parent volunteers and teachers that have enthusiasm and interest. Thus there is need for every school to have in its establishment a position of a trained librarian or teacher librarian, who can also liaise with teachers on the best uses of the library.
- Primary school teachers who cannot make the link between library use and teaching and learning must be exposed to professional programs that will help them develop the pedagogical skills required. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, together with the University of Botswana (which offers training in school librarianship) that can collaborate to ensure that this is achieved.

Conclusion

This paper has shown how collaborative effort led to the success story that is the Southern Region primary school libraries project. Such collaboration however, was not without its problems, as not all partners delivered as expected, showing that it is important to start with small ideas and move on to bigger ones as the collaboration advances. However, there is no doubt that collaboration is necessary in the delivery of social services and must be forged if progress is to be made. The Southern region Primary School Library Project has become an integral part of teaching and learning. Parents have come to appreciate that their participation in the education of their children goes beyond parent teacher conferences/meetings, but has them being an integral part of the learning process of their children through volunteerism in running the libraries and storytelling to the children. The project has also brought into sharp relief the fact that education of children is not only the responsibility of government, but that non governmental organizations have a critical role too.

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